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For Immediate Release Contact: Ann Bennett 301-725-7975

Director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org

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Laurel Museum Reopens June 26 With Updated Exhibit, New Summer Hours

Laurel, MD..“2020 What a Year!” will debut Saturday, June 26 at 12 Noon when The Laurel Museum in Laurel, Maryland reopens after 15 months. In addition to an updated exhibit, the museum will have new hours, and new opening days.

2020 What A Year! will update the current exhibit: “Unpacking Laurel’s Past: 150 Years on Display.” Focusing on the fact that 2020 itself was an historic year, the exhibit area will include the original 2020 displays but feature new sections on *COVID-19 in Laurel*, *Social Justice in Laurel*, and *The 150th Anniversary Celebration That (Mostly) Wasn’t*. “Unpacking Laurel’s Past,” which opened February 2, 2020, and celebrated Laurel’s 150 Anniversary, was forced to close in mid-March 2020 because of the COVID-pandemic. The updated exhibit area will also feature a section on the Laurel Museum – which opened twenty-five years ago in Spring, 1996. Beginning with the grand reopening, the Laurel Museum will be open new summer hours of Saturdays and Sundays from 12-4. Admission will remain free. Mask, Social Distancing and capacity sizes will follow the most current City of Laurel requirements. The Museum will be closed Sunday, July 4.

According to LHS Executive Director Ann Bennett, the new exhibit materials are largely a collaboration between the Museum and the Laurel community. “We asked the Laurel community to share with us their photos, signs and experiences as they related both to COVID in Laurel, and to the Social Justice concerns that were so much a part of the conversation in Laurel and nationally in 2020. Many did, and it’s those artifacts and photos you’ll see in the new exhibit, from Jermaine Powell at the June 7 protest holding a sign that says ‘I ♥ my Black Skin’ to a “Heroes Live Here” sign on the Laurel Post Office to the Islamic community distributing food.”

In addition to the exhibit displays, the updated area will feature a videotaped interview with Carlos Hinajosa, the Laurel high school student who organized Laurel’s June 7 protest and march at Gude Park. Additional images will share many of the people and signs from the protest, community, and COVID-related events.

The exhibit section on Laurel’s planned 150th celebration was designed to recognize the many people and activities that had been planning throughout 2020, but which had to be cancelled because of COVID. The one “home-grown” celebration was a city-wide display of hand-made signs on April 4, 2020, the day Laurel was incorporated 150 years ago, in 1870.

The other “new” exhibit is in honor of the Laurel Museum’s 25th Anniversary. The Museum, which opened to the public in the Spring of 1996, has had more than 25 exhibitions, more than one for every year. The exhibit showcases the building from its original state, its

founding directors, artifacts found during the renovation of the building, and objects from the programs and activities from Galas to House Tours, to Camps held over the years.

The Laurel Museum is located at 817 Main Street, Laurel, Maryland. Laurel Museum summer hours are Saturdays and Sundays 12-4. Weekday group tours and research at the Laurel Historical Society by appointment only. For more information visit www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org or contact info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org, or 301-725-7975.

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Photos and captions:



Laurel Post Office
Laurel Museum
Collection/Photo
Charles Hessler



Jermaine Powell at Laurel's
June 7 Black Lives Laurel
March
Laurel Museum
Collection/Photo courtesy
Dorett Powell



Food distribution at the Islamic
Community Center of Laurel
Photo courtesy City of Laurel